

The alternatives analysis determined that the Ehrenberg to Cadiz alternative avoids the Class 1 impacts to Biology and Public Safety, avoids the Garlock and Calico faults, and significantly reduces adverse effects anticipated by construction of the original Project (Ehrenberg to Wheeler Ridge, 304 miles). The Ehrenberg to Cadiz Project also substantially meets the Project Purpose and Need as described by EPNG. The Ehrenberg to Cadiz alternative consists of MP 215.5 – 303.5 of the original Project, and includes the new 6.4 mile Cadiz Lateral.

The topics addressed in the Draft EIR/EA include biological resources (including vegetation, wildlife, aquatic species, wetlands, and special-status species), agricultural resources, geology and soils (including seismicity, and mineral and paleontological resources), hydrology and water quality, hazards and public safety, air quality, traffic and transportation, noise, cultural resources, aesthetic/visual resources, land use and planning, socioeconomics (including population and housing), recreation, environmental justice, cumulative impacts, and growth-inducing impacts. The Draft EIR/EA describes the affected environment as it currently exists, discusses the environmental consequences of the proposed Project, and compares the Project's potential impact to that of alternatives. The Draft EIR/EA presents measures to eliminate or reduce the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project; measures include those incorporated into the Project design, recommended mitigation measures, and the conclusions of agency staff.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF FINALIZING ADDENDUM/EA

As required by section 15132 of the State *CEQA Guidelines* and Title 40 CFR, the Final EIR/EA consists of the following elements:

- The Draft EIR/EA;
- Finalizing Addendum/EA
 - A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR/EA (Section 2);
 - Responses to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process (Section 3); and
 - Revisions to the Draft EIR/EA (Section 4).

1.3 DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The CSLC is the State agency with jurisdiction and management control over California's sovereign and school lands. As such, the CSLC is the lead agency in California for preparing the EIR/EA, complying with the CEQA (Public Resources Code [PRC] section 21000 et seq.), following the guidelines for the implementation of the CEQA (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, section 15000 et seq.). The BLM is the Federal agency responsible for considering a ROW grant on BLM-administered lands. Under section 185(f) of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the BLM has the authority to issue ROW grants for all affected Federal lands—in accordance with Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 2800 and 2880, subsequent 2800 and 2880 Manuals, and Handbook 2801-1. The BLM is the lead Federal agency for the preparation of this EIR/EA in compliance with the requirements of the NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the NEPA (Title 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). The FERC is the Federal agency responsible for authorizing the construction and operation of interstate natural gas transmission projects under section 7 of the Natural Gas Act of 1938, as amended. The FERC is a cooperating agency in the preparation of this EIR/EA.

The CSLC and BLM coordinate the review of the EIR/EA by Federal, State and local responsible and trustee agencies. These responsible and trustee agencies include the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD), San Bernardino County, and Riverside County.

The CSLC would use the Final EIR/EA to determine whether to terminate existing leases and issue EPNG new ROW leases. The CSLC must certify that:

- the Final EIR/EA has been completed in compliance with the CEQA;
- the Final EIR/EA was presented to the CSLC in a public meeting, and the CSLC reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR/EA prior to considering the proposed Project; and

- the Final EIR/EA reflects the CSLC's independent judgement and analysis (State CEQA Guidelines section 15090[a]).

In conjunction with certification of the Final EIR/EA and its consideration of the proposed Project, the CSLC must prepare one or more written findings of fact for each significant environmental impact identified in the document. These findings are:

- the Project has been changed (including adoption of mitigation measures) to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact;
- changes to the Project are within another agency's jurisdiction and have been or should be adopted; or
- specific considerations make mitigation measures or alternatives infeasible.

If any of the impacts identified in the Final EIR/EA cannot be reduced to a level that is less than significant, the CSLC may issue a Statement of Overriding Considerations for approval of the project if specific social, economic, or other factors justify the Project's unavoidable adverse environmental effects. If the CSLC decides to approve a project for which a Final EIR/EA has been prepared, the CSLC issues a Notice of Determination following such action.

The BLM would use the Final EIR/EA to determine whether to issue a new or amended ROW grant and to issue associated temporary use permits that would apply to BLM-managed lands in the project area. The BLM would consider conformance with land use plans and impacts on resources and programs in determining whether to issue a new or amended ROW grant.

The FERC would use the Final EIR/EA to evaluate the significance of impacts that could result before deciding if the Project is in the public convenience and necessity.